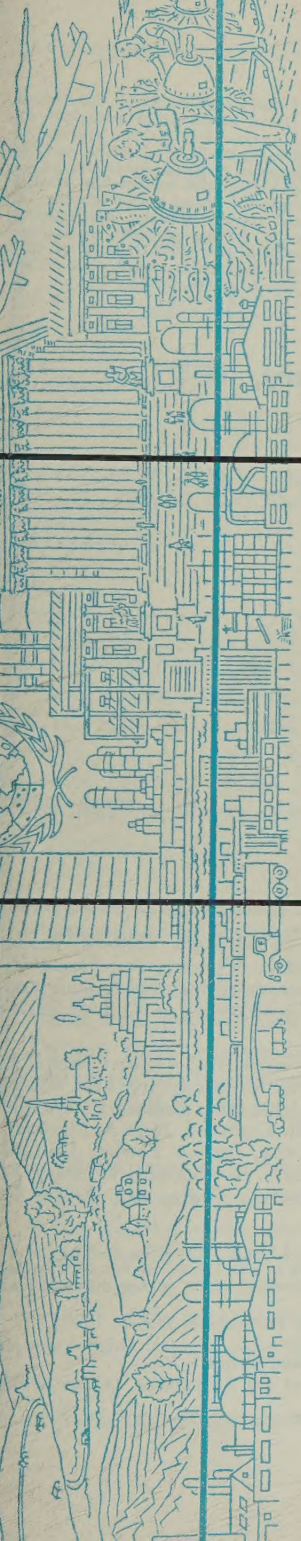

February, 1957

SOCIAL PROGRESS

Modern Palestine
Chronology and Commentary

Vol. XLVII, No. 6

SOCIAL PROGRESS

Published by the Department of Social Education and Action of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., to provide a forum for the church on subjects of social concern for Christians. It includes program resources, legislative developments, and guides to worship, study, and action for leaders of social action groups in local churches, presbyteries, synods, presbyterial and synodical societies. Articles represent the opinions of the authors—not the official policy of the Department of Social Education and Action or of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

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Published monthly, except August, by the Department of Social Education and Action of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, at 1009 Sloan St., Crawfordsville, Indiana. Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Crawfordsville, Indiana, under the act of March 3, 1879.

Editorial and Executive office, 830 Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia 7, Pa.

Subscriptions, $1.00 a year; three years for $2.50. Single copy, 15 cents. Group rates on request. Send subscriptions to 830 Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia 7, Pa.

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From This Vantage Point...

UNDERSTANDING PALESTINE

AN AMERICAN traveler visiting Palestine for the first time is very likely to be surprised, even shocked, to find that the country is so small. From a base in the Old City of Jerusalem on the Jordan side of the border one travels very quickly over good roads to Bethany and Bethlehem, to the Dead Sea, to Jericho and the Jordan River. The most distant part of the area of Jordan that lies east of the Jordan River is only fifty miles away from Jerusalem. On the other side of the border, from a hotel in Tel Aviv one can travel by car quickly to Haifa, to Nazareth, to the Sea of Galilee, or in the other direction to Beersheba and the southern extensions of the Dead Sea, do his business or visit the hallowed places, and easily return to Tel Aviv before the five o'clock curfew.

Christians, of course, have a deep and continuing interest in the area and its problems. This is for them the Holy Land, the place where those events occurred which are so meaningful in our religious heritage. It is also the Holy Land for the Moslem world, and for all of Judaism.

Recent events, and by that we mean events over the last fifty years or so, accentuate the area's importance in world affairs. This is no time for easy and superficial judgments about this or that aspect of what we like to call "the Palestine problem." We had better see Palestine as a puzzle before we try to solve it as a problem. The events of the past, the tangled strands of history which have bearing

on the present situation, need to be analyzed and understood if one is to be fair in his appraisal of Palestine as it is today.

We present here a "chronology and commentary" on modern Palestine. We do so with no little apprehension, for the subject is so vast and complicated, and contains so many hidden factors, that one is bound to present a picture that is incomplete, particularly in the short space we have available here. Let us say that we have tried to avoid the appearance of being either "pro-Arab" or "pro-Israel" in our handling of the sensitive subject of the Jewish-Arab tensions in the Middle East.

Indeed, we believe that it would be improper for us to take one side or another in the argument that goes on and on about the rights and wrongs of the creation of a Jewish state on what had long been regarded as Arab soil. We recommend the Nehruian approach (which sounds quite "Christian" to us), which is to say and do nothing that would sharpen or extend the clash. For us to engage in the debate would not serve the goal of reconciliation.

Many people who exhibit strong "pro-Arab" or "pro-Israel" bias seem to be "selective" in their reading of history. They overlook or disregard historical events and developments, in Europe as well as in the Middle East, that are part of the real story of modern Palestine. We have tried to avoid this error in our present account.

We hope and pray for the time when the Holy Land will be free from tension and strife, and when the glorious people who live there, on both sides of the tragic border that now divides the land, will be delivered from fear.

The SEA Staff

I

Before 1914

For many centuries prior to the First World War, Jews, Arabs, and several Christian groups had lived together in Palestine in comparative concord and mutual respect. In the seventeenth century, Palestine became a part of the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire. Following 1870, there were a number of Jewish migrations to the Holy Land, partly under the impetus of the Zionist movement, which aspired to a "national home" for the Jews.

Semitic Origins

Many peoples have made their homes in the narrow Palestinian corridor over the long centuries of human history. For the purpose of our study of the Palestine problem, let us note especially the ancient migrations of two Semitic peoples.

The Hebrews were led by Moses and Joshua from the wilderness of Sinai into this land "flowing with milk and honey" probably in the thirteenth century before Christ. Palestine long had been for them "the Promised Land." Through the centuries before the time of Christ, the life of Palestine was essentially Jewish, although the little land was free from foreign domination for only brief, precarious periods. In the first century after Christ (during the latter decades of the Roman era), the Jewish Dispersion (Diaspora) began. The Jewish population was reduced to a few scattered remnants.

The Arabs began to come into Palestine, raiding and settling, shortly after the death of the prophet Mohammed in A.D. 632. Their origins were in the Arabian Peninsula. They were essentially a desert people, although for several centuries there had been a rather advanced Arab civilization in the region now known as Yemen. For more than twelve hundred years (until fairly recent times) Palestine was part of the Arab world.

Early in the sixteenth century, through the conquests of Sultan Selim I, Palestine became attached to the Ottoman Empire. Its status during most of the next four hundred years was that of a province, not a colony. In this period Palestine was essentially Moslem by virtue of its predominantly Arab population and its connection with Turkey, then the center of Islamic culture. Jews and miscellaneous Christian groups, however, lived in relative peace with the Arabs, mostly in separate communities.

The country was subjected to a variety of pressures over the cen-

turies, but as far as we are concerned the story is that of Jews and Arabs in a small and poor land which has come to be venerated by the faithful followers of three great religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Jewish Migrations

Oppressions and restrictions in Palestine during the latter decades of Roman rule in the first and second centuries of the Christian era forced large numbers of Jews to leave Palestine. They migrated in all directions. The Jewish community in Yemen, for example, had its beginning in the first century. In time, Jewish groups were to be found in all the lands bordering the Mediterranean and in all the countries of Europe. With the opening of the Americas to settlement and trade, the "Diaspora" brought Jewish groups to Brazil and other parts of South America and later to North America.

Throughout the Diaspora, Jews could be found in the Holy Land. They were very few at first, but the number gradually increased until in the mid-nineteenth century there were nearly 25,000 in the land, mostly in four cities—Tiberias, Safad, Hebron, and Jerusalem.

The modern return of Jews to Palestine began in 1882, following vicious persecutions and pogroms in Russia. In the first wave of immigration, some 7,000 Russian Jews sought safety and freedom in the Holy Land.

Anti-Semitic violence in Kishinev, Russia, in 1903, set off a second wave of Palestinian immigration. Between 1904 and 1918, more than 30,000 Jewish refugees settled in Palestine. At the break of the First World War, the Jewish population of Palestine numbered nearly 100,000. This number was reduced to 55,000 in a matter of three or four years by epidemic, crop failures, Turkish reprisals, and the vicissitudes of war. The Arab population was about 700,000.

The Zionist Movement

Zionism, as a movement to establish a home for the Jews, had its beginning during the first wave of Palestinian immigration in 1882. A colonization society set out to raise funds for the purchase of land in Palestine. Early efforts, however, were limited and disorganized.

A Viennese journalist, Theodor Herzl, shocked by the anti-Semitism disclosed in the Dreyfus trial in 1894, wrote *Der Judenstaat* (*The Jewish State*). In his book, Herzl expounded the idea that only in their own land could the oppressed Jews of many countries find freedom and salvation. He further developed his plan in a speech before the first Zionist congress, in Switzerland in 1897. Herzl became the acknowledged leader of a vitalized Zionist movement which had as its goal the establishment of a Jewish state. He died in 1904.

From time to time the Zionists considered areas other than Palestine as being suitable for colonization, and more immediately accessible. These suggestions were resoundly rejected, however, by the assemblies of the Zionist movement. Palestine became a more realizable goal with the decline of Turkish power in the Middle East, and the rise of British influence in that area, before the First World War.

II

1914–1922

Early in the First World War, France and Great Britain sought and enlisted the aid of the Arab world, promising the Arabs "complete and final franchisement." With significant Arab help, the Turkish and German forces in the Middle East were defeated, and Palestine, along with Syria, was "liberated."

At the same time, for various reasons, the British Government gave official endorsement to the Zionist goal of "a national home" for the Jews in Palestine.

After the war, the area was mandated to the French and British, a development which the Arabs regarded as a betrayal. Palestine came under British control.

The Arab Revolt

For several years before the First World War there was rising restlessness and ferment among the Arab people. Promises of greater Arab independence within a decentralized Turkish-Arab state did not materialize. Arab leaders became convinced that their cause lay in a complete break with the Ottoman Empire.

Then came the war, and Turkey was quickly involved on the side of the Germans. Britain approached the Arabs with a pledge to support their struggle for freedom if they would enter the war on the British side. Negotiations extended through 1915 and early 1916, culminating in a design of an Arab state centering in the kingdom of Hejaz in the northeastern reaches of the Arabian Peninsula and embracing Palestine and much of Syria to the north (including areas now known as Jordan and Iraq). The new state was to be independent, but tied defensively and economically to Great Britain.

With this understanding, the Arab Revolt was launched in June, 1916—the first shot "for freedom" being fired in Mecca. The Arab war, marked by the well-known exploits of Colonel T. E. Lawrence (see his *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*), contributed much to victory in the Middle East for the Allied Powers.

A key leader in the early phases of the Arab Revolt was Sherif Husein, the king of Hejaz and founder of the Hashemite dynasty. As a descendant of the Prophet and protector of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, he had a unique position among Arab rulers. A son, Faisal, became the outstanding personality of the Revolt, his liberation of Damascus in October, 1918, being its crowning achievement. A

second son, Abdullah, early known for his strongly pro-British feelings, led an abortive attempt to subject the entire Arabian Peninsula to Hashemite rule. (Later, Faisal and Abdullah became kings, respectively, of Iraq and of Jordan.)

The Balfour Declaration

A British Zionist, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, contributed much to the war effort through his achievements in the field of chemistry. In the third year of the war, he and several fellow Zionists offered to secure underwriting for a substantial loan to the British Government in recognition of Britain's official support for the Jewish goal of resettlement in Palestine.

At the same time, Zionists in the United States, led by Louis Brandeis, encouraged President Wilson to pledge American support for a British statement in behalf of the Jewish Palestinian project.

The result of these efforts was the Balfour Declaration issued by the British Government on November 2, 1917. The Declaration was in the form of a letter from Lord Balfour, Foreign Secretary, to Lord Rothschild of banking fame, a recent convert to Zionism.

The communication, one of the most fateful of our times, stated: "His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate their achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

The vagueness and ambiguity of this Declaration should be noted. Does "a national home" mean an independent state? President Wilson and other leaders of the time seemed to think so, and the phrase is similar to language used by Herzl and other Zionist leaders in describing their goal. It was common among Zionists to speak of "home" instead of "state" in order to win wider support among the Jews of many countries who did not wish to endanger their status as citizens. There is no question, however, about the political nature of the Zionist intention. The aim was not simply a haven for refugees, or a cultural home, but a Jewish state.

It should be noted also that the Balfour letter contained a promise that was clearly inconsistent with the pledges made to the Arabs regarding their franchisement and the setting up of an Arab kingdom.

The Declaration was bound to arouse great dismay and confusion throughout the Arab world. This was somewhat allayed by quick British assurances to Sherif Husein that the settlement of Jews in Palestine would be in harmony with the goal of Arab freedom. Early in 1918, a group of Arab leaders in Cairo elicited from the British a further assurance that the consent of the governed was to be the controlling principle in the political development of the Arab lands. In July, 1918, President Wilson declared that the post-war arrangements in the Middle East would be based upon their

acceptance by the peoples affected.

An Anglo-French statement released in November, 1918, reaffirmed the pledge of France and England to liberate the Arabs from Turkish rule and to aid them in setting up national governments of their own choosing. These statements, especially the Anglo-French declaration, quieted widespread suspicion directed against the British and French Governments, and barely averted a mutiny in the Arab Army.

In Palestine, with its predominantly Arab population, resentment of the Balfour Declaration led to riots against Jewish settlements.

After the War

Then came peace and, especially for the Arabs, a period of uncertainty and deepening disillusionment. The Peace Conference in 1919 was a gradual revelation of the intention of the victorious European powers to establish themselves in the Middle East.

President Wilson, holding to his principle of the consent of the governed, proposed a commission to visit Syria and Iraq for the purpose of discovering the wishes of the people. The French refused to co-operate and the British, after naming their members, backed out. The American members (known as the King-Crane Commission), after spending six weeks in their investigations, noted in their report to President Wilson the intense anti-Zionist feeling among the Arabs and urged a serious reconsideration of the Zionist program.

In the meantime, Arab nationalist leaders meeting in Damascus proclaimed an independent kingdom embracing Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine, with Faisal at its head. The French opposed the effort and caused it to fail.

A result of the Peace Conference was the establishment of the League of Nations and the inauguration of the mandate system to replace the outworn method of colonial domination. In the new method, springing from Wilsonian idealism, the League placed conquered territories in the hands of the Allied Powers to be administered as trusts. The purpose of the mandates was the care and development of the people of the assigned countries. In accepting the mandates, the Powers renounced their rights as conquerors.

Britain received the mandate for Palestine as well as for the areas to the west—Transjordan and Iraq. Syria and Lebanon were mandated to France. The United States, retreating into isolationism in international politics, turned its back on the League and refused to become a mandatary for any part of the former Ottoman Empire.

The mandate by which the British assumed control of Palestine was somewhat ambiguous. It directed the mandatary (Britain) to encourage and develop self-government in the direction of independence. At the same time, it required the administration to facilitate Jewish immigration and settlement with the limitation that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."

The mandates were awarded in 1920, although they did not become "legal" until the League was formed and took appropriate action in 1922.

III

1922–1945

Between 1922 and 1938, the Jewish population in Palestine was augmented by immigration, especially in the 1930's as a result of Nazi oppressions in Germany. Jewish-Arab tensions increased. The British were unable to find a workable solution to the problem.

During the Second World War, Palestinian Jews served in the Allied effort. The Arab population was mostly indifferent to the issues of the war, in spite of the pro-Axis activities of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem.

After the war, Arab-Jewish tensions became more serious than ever, and disturbances mounted in violence.

In the meantime, Iraq was declared a sovereign state in 1930. Lebanon and Syria achieved their independence in 1943 and 1944 respectively. Jordan's independence was affirmed by a treaty with Great Britain in 1946.

Jewish Migration, Continued

Immediately after the First World War, a third wave of immigration restored the Jewish population of Palestine to its prewar level of 100,000 persons. Predominant in this group of immigrants were young Zionist idealists who came not as refugees but as pioneers. Their desire was not to live in the cities, but to accept the hardships of farming. Many of them settled in swamplands in Galilee—purchased from the Arab absentee owners by the Jewish Agency—which they drained and converted into fertile farmland. Immigration in this period (1919-1923) was largely inspired by the Balfour Declaration.

A fourth wave of newcomers to Palestine in the middle and late 1920's inundated the facilities for handling them. In one year, 34,000 immigrants flooded in from Poland, Rumania, Lithuania, and Germany. For the most part, they came not as pioneers to settle and work the land, but as petty merchants hoping to invest their savings in small businesses, and semiskilled laborers seeking employment. Their coming resulted in a real estate boom in the cities of Palestine, followed by economic collapse and wide unemployment. Recovery took place in 1929, however, and soon there was work for everyone who wanted it. By 1929 there were 162,000 Jews in Palestine. The Arab population at this time numbered 800,000.

The fifth period of accelerated immigration and settlement of Jews in Palestine began in 1932 and continued through the Second World

War. The great majority of newcomers were refugees from the horrors of Nazi repression and decimation. Others came from Arab countries where reprisals against Jews had become increasingly frequent and severe.

It must never be forgotten that during Hitler's relatively brief rule in Germany, more than 4,000,000 of Central Europe's 10,000,000 Jews were put to death in the gas chambers of the infinitely dreadful extermination camps. The Jews who could leave Germany fled in panic to every nation of the free world that offered haven. The pressure upon the British to keep open the doors of Palestine to Jewish immigration, born of frantic, desperate human need, was enormous. It would seem that any assessment of the Palestinian problem that overlooks or minimizes the human situation that prevailed in that tragic period is unrealistic and unmerciful.

The number of refugees arriving in 1933 was 30,000; in 1934 the number rose to 42,000, and in 1935 to 61,000, bringing the Jewish population of Palestine to more than 400,000 persons. Severe restrictions were imposed by the British in 1939 and thereafter.

Grievances and Disorders

From the very first hint of the idea, the Arabs of Palestine (and the rest of the Arab world) resisted the development of a "national home" for Jews in the Holy Land. They resented large-scale Jewish immigration, regardless of what lay back of it, as inevitably contributing to the Zionist purpose. Zionism was a thing to be feared and hated. This feeling was well-nigh universal among the Arab people.

As Jewish immigration continued, under British aegis, at a high rate, the Arabs began to fear that their own numbers would eventually be surpassed by the Jewish population. This was, for the Arabs, a deeply disquieting realization.

Another difficulty was the manner in which the Jewish Agency, using funds provided by Zionist sympathizers in all parts of the world, was able to purchase a considerable part of the best land of Palestine. A large proportion of these purchases were from absentee Arab landlords. Sometimes the prices were exorbitant. Often the Agency paid not only the absentee owner, but also the tenant who lived on and used the land (sometimes for crops or orchards, more often for grazing) and who was dispossessed by the transaction. The impoverished Arabs of the countryside, unable to compete with the Jewish Agency, more and more were disposed to turn to non-co-operation and violence.

Through most of the first two decades of this century, the Jewish settlers and their Arab neighbors lived and worked together in peace, although the Arabs outnumbered the Jews by overwhelming ratios.

In 1920, there was a brief outbreak of Arab rioting against Jewish settlers. This was the year of revelation and denouement when the Arab dream of an independent state was broken on the shattering realities of British and French diplomacy. The riots expressed resentment against the Balfour Declaration and its implementation in the mandate.

Through most of the 1920's, Arabs and Jews maintained orderly relations with one another (under British rule, of course). The ratio of Arab to Jewish population during most of this time was about five to one.

In 1929, the era of order ended suddenly with outbreaks of violence in Jerusalem and elsewhere. One of the most serious of the incidents occurred in Hebron, where an Arab mob killed sixty-five undefended Jews. Following the disorders of 1929, there were never more than brief interludes of tenuous peace between Arabs and Jews in Palestine.

The growing flood of refugees from Nazi fury in Germany set off a new wave of violence in 1936. Along with armed attacks on Jewish settlements, which met with organized Jewish resistance, the Arabs engaged in widespread strikes and civil disobedience which affected all of Palestine outside the Jewish areas. The disturbances became a full-scale revolt lasting from 1937 to 1939 and detached parts of Arab Palestine from British control.

The revolt may have been inflamed, to a limited extent, by the agitations of certain Arab leaders (such as the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem) who were later exiled, but it was really a sustained demonstration of wide and deep opposition to any development in the direction of a Jewish state. The revolution was encouraged and supported by the Arabs of the other parts of the Middle East.

The revolt was "called off" by the Arabs when the Second World War began in 1939. It was evident that the Arabs (of the entire Middle East) would never be reconciled to the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine, that they would meet any attempt to set up such a state with armed force.

Shifts in British Policy

Through the 1930's, as trouble increased in Palestine, the British Government sought a basis of order that would be acceptable to both Arabs and Jews. Each series of disturbances was followed by an investigation, new recommendations, and a change of policy. Several plans were devised, tried out, discarded as unworkable.

For example, a commission was sent to Palestine to investigate the causes of the 1929 riots. After the commission reported, the Government issued the White Paper of 1930 which called for restrictions on both immigration and land purchases by the Jewish Agency. Zionist opposition and, especially, the pressure of events in Europe affecting large numbers of Jews resulted in an interpretation of the White Paper that amounted to its abrogation.

In 1937 a commission reported that it found Arab development in Palestine advanced rather than retarded as a result of Jewish colonization.

Several investigations were made of Arab disorders in Palestine in the 1937-1939 period. The result was the White Paper of 1939, which stated: "His Majesty's Government therefore now declare unequivocally that it is not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish state. They would indeed regard it as contrary to their obligations to the Arabs under the mandate, as

well as to assurances which have been given to the Arab people in the past, that the Arab population of Palestine should be made the subjects of a Jewish state against their will." The Paper put severe restrictions and controls on land transfers, and limited Jewish immigration to 15,000 per year for five years. The Paper also held forth the hope of Palestinian "self-government" inside of ten years.

The White Paper of 1939 was welcomed by the Arabs as a vindication of twenty-year-old British pledges. For the Jews it was a betrayal—a repudiation of the Balfour Declaration and a reversal of policies that had prevailed since the beginning of the mandate. It was regarded as especially intolerable in the light of what was happening to millions of Jews in Central and Eastern Europe. Thereafter Jewish leaders openly and increasingly opposed the British administration of the mandate.

Still, large numbers of Jewish refugees, fleeing the tortures of Hitler's concentration camps, sought entrance into Palestine. The quotas prescribed in the White Paper were quickly surpassed. Shiploads of refugees were intercepted by the British Navy and turned away. Detention camps in Cyprus were soon filled with men and women and children who could not, for their very lives' sake, return to the Continent.

The Second World War

Palestine was inevitably affected by the pressures and events of the Second World War. The Middle East as a whole was considered a strategic area by both the Allies and the Axis Powers. The campaigns in North Africa, the defense of Egypt, and the defensive maneuverings in Syria, Iraq, and Iran, brought Palestine close to the war.

Jewish leaders were embittered when the doors of Palestine were firmly closed in the face of refugees who managed to escape the Nazi tyranny. In spite of this, the Jews supported the British war efforts—some 30,000 Palestinian Jews serving in the armed forces.

Palestinian Arabs were mostly indifferent to the issues of the war. They remained aloof in spite of the fulminations of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Hadji Amin al-Husaini, who had been exiled by the British in 1937 for his part in Arab disorders, and who directed pro-Axis agitation among the Arabs during the war, from Baghdad and Berlin.

As for the rest of the Arab world, the Palestine question continued to be the burning issue throughout the war. In 1940, the British Government negotiated an understanding with Arab leaders, on the basis of the White Paper of 1939, whereby some support was given to the Allied cause. Later the British brought about the organization of the Arab League, a compact among most of the Arab nations for mutual defense and development.

Iraq had been declared an independent state, after a decade of preparation under the British mandate, in 1930. Faisal, heroic Arab figure of the Hashemite family, became king. Lebanon and Syria achieved their freedom in the mid-forties, largely as a result of the collapse of France, although their status was not fully recognized until after the war.

IV

1945–1949

In 1947, the United Nations adopted a proposal to partition Palestine into an Arab state and a Jewish state. The Jews prepared to set up the state of Israel. The Arabs, resisting the proposal, made no effort to establish an independent Arab nation in Palestine.

The British surrendered the mandate in 1948, and Israel immediately declared her existence as an independent nation. In a matter of hours, six Arab countries launched a co-ordinated armed attack on the new Jewish state.

Israel won the brief war and added 2,380 square miles to the 5,670 assigned to her in the United Nations' resolution. Jordan and Egypt, though defeated, likewise added Palestinian territory to their domains—Jordan, some 2,000 square miles, and Egypt, the 200 square miles of the Gaza Strip.

The Arabs of Palestine were the real losers of the war.

After the War

In the period immediately following the end of the war in Europe, several developments greatly affected the course of events in Palestine.

1. Rising nationalism in Egypt struck at the heart of the long-time British policy in the Middle East. Egypt had served as the base of Great Britain's armed power in the area. The Suez Canal was indispensable to her economic health. Egypt's determination to end the use of her facilities by the British Army and fleet, and even to assume control of the Suez Canal, forced Great Britain to seek other arrangements. New answers to the Palestinian question had to take into account the British stake in the Suez.

2. The United Nations came into existence in the fall of 1945. It was inevitable that many problems relating to Palestine, and eventually the central issue of the erection of a Jewish state in the face of Arab resistance, should come before that body.

3. The British mandate for Transjordan was terminated, and the area was declared an independent state, early in 1946. The head of the state was Abdullah, a prince of the Hashemite family and brother of Faisal, King of Iraq. The basis of the action was a twenty-five-year treaty of alliance with Great Britain. The move was not unrelated to the fact that earlier in 1946, the question of mandates had been raised at the United Nations.

It should be noted that Transjordan was formerly a part of the province of Syria of the Ottoman Empire. It consists mostly of desert, although the highlands just east of the Jordan River and Dead Sea receive enough rain to maintain a settled population. The area was constituted as a political unit by the British, to whom it was mandated in 1920. The British used Transjordan as a base of military operations. The country had a population of only 200,000 in 1946. It lacked human and natural resources for any significant development as a modern state.

4. Jewish leaders in Palestine realized that they were entirely "on their own," and made their plans accordingly. This realization had become clear with the issuing of the White Paper of 1939, which abrogated the Balfour Declaration in favor of previous British pledges to the Arabs. Zionists could no longer count on British support in any form. Indeed, the British employed many tactics to prevent the development of the Jewish state.

A defense organization, Haganah, had been organized by the Jews of Palestine in 1942. Related to the Jewish Agency, and therefore having "semiofficial" status among the Jews, Haganah operated at first as an underground army. It achieved a strength of 80,000 men, many of whom received useful training in the British forces in the war.

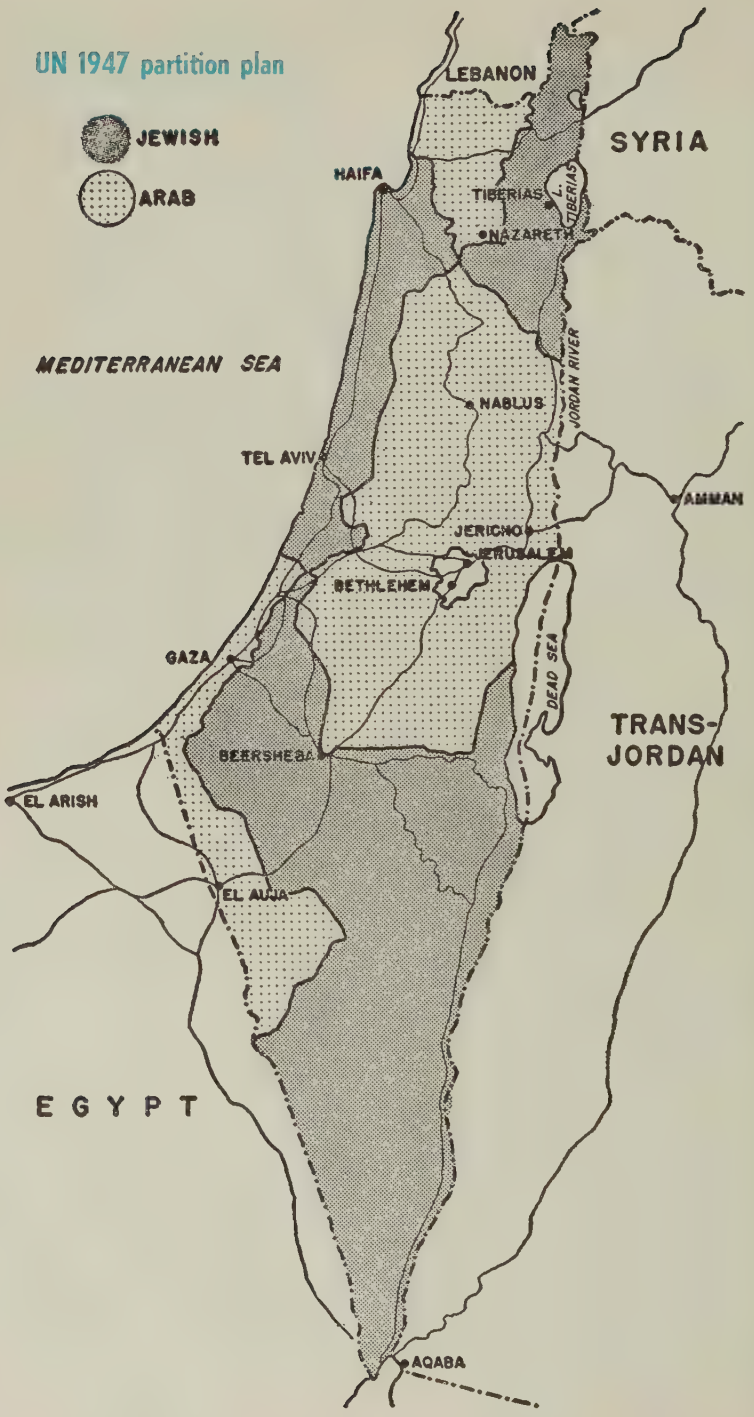
Jewish extremists, however, were scornful of Haganah's relatively mild policy of "nonretaliation." Several groups were formed among them "to fight terror with terror." Two of these groups, Irgun and the Stern Gang, became well known for their terrorist activities against Arabs and British alike. The extremists never had wide support among the people and were repudiated by Haganah. Nevertheless, they introduced a new factor into the Palestinian problem and made more impossible than ever any hope of improving Arab-Jewish relations. A British White Paper in 1946 documented and condemned Jewish terrorist activities.

Toward Partition

The American Government expressed concern about the Palestinian situation in mid-1945 when President Truman urged the British to admit to Palestine 100,000 additional Jewish refugees—the tragic remnants of Nazi repressions. An Anglo-American commission of inquiry, set up in late 1945, likewise recommended a lowering of the barrier against Palestinian immigration. The commission came up with no workable settlement of Arab-Jewish differences.

After a final and futile attempt to find a solution in an extended conference with Arab leaders, the British announced (in February, 1947) that they were turning over the entire Palestine problem to the United Nations. A special session of the UN General Assembly in April, 1947, set up a new commission which carried on an intensive investigation and submitted two reports to the UN in September. A majority report favored the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state. A minority report recommended a federal state with Jewish and Arab components.

(*Continued on page 18*)


UN 1947 partition plan
JEWISH
ARAB
LEBANON
SYRIA
HAIFA
TIBERIAS
L. TIBERIAS
NAZARETH
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
JORDAN RIVER
NABLUS
TEL AVIV
AMMAN
JERICHO
JERUSALEM
BETHLEHEM
GAZA
DEAD SEA
TRANS-
JORDAN
BEERSHEBA
EL ARISH
EL AUJA
EGYPT
AQABA

Maps on pages 16 and 17 are from *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, published by The Arab Information Center, New York, N.Y.

(Continued from page 15)

The United Nations General Assembly, in November, 1947, supported the view that the partition of Palestine offered the only feasible solution. In the partition plan, the boundaries were "gerrymandered" so as to include as much as possible of the Jewish population, outside of Jerusalem, in the proposed Jewish state. The Arabs were so distributed that not more than two thirds of them were included in the areas assigned to the proposed Arab state. The plan provided that the political division of the country should be accompanied by economic union. Jerusalem and its environs were to be internationalized.

The Jews regarded the plan as inadequate by half. To the Arabs it was completely unsatisfactory.

With the help and encouragement of surrounding Arab states, the Arabs of Palestine launched a series of armed attacks on Jewish settlements throughout Palestine. These attacks elicited harsh Jewish reprisals by terrorist factions. A shocking incident was the raid on Deir Yasin, where two hundred Arabs were killed. Another was the bombing of a train near Haifa—a tragedy that resulted in a large loss of life. The situation became so tense that a special session of the United Nations General Assembly convened in April, 1948, to reconsider the Palestine problem in the light of new developments.

In the meantime, the British refused to force a settlement not agreeable to both parties, and announced that they would surrender the mandate on May 15, 1948, regardless of consequences.

While the UN debated a United States proposal for a temporary United Nations trusteeship in Palestine, Jewish leaders meeting in Tel Aviv on the night of May 14 proclaimed the erection of an independent Jewish state in the area assigned to the Jews in the plan of partition. In a matter of minutes the President of the United States recognized the Tel Aviv group as the *de facto* Government of the new state of Israel.

The Arabs of Palestine made no move to set up a state in the area allocated to them.

The Arab-Israeli War

On the morning of May 15, the first day of Israel's independence, six of the seven Arab League nations launched a co-ordinated attack aimed at exterminating Zionist influence and restoring order in Palestine on an Arab basis. Most of the Arab states had few trained forces and little military equipment. Transjordan, however, was able to use its British-trained Arab Legion. Israel, with a relatively small population and no allies, seemed to be in a bad way.

After early successes, however, the forces of the Arab League, under badly divided commands and poorly supplied, were matched and held by the Haganah troops of Israel.

In the face of these developments, the UN General Assembly called upon the Security Council to try to bring an end to the war. Count Folke

Bernadotte of Sweden was named mediator. On June 9, taking advantage of a lull in the fighting, he was able to effect a four-week cease-fire. When no permanent settlement could be reached, the Arab forces resumed their attacks. They were able to make no headway, however, and on July 15 a second truce went into effect, broken frequently by renewed fighting.

Count Bernadotte, while investigating complaints against Jewish activities in a school near Jerusalem on September 17, was assassinated by members of the Stern group of Jewish terrorists. He was succeeded as UN mediator by his assistant, Dr. Ralph Bunche.

Mediation efforts continued under Dr. Bunche's skillful leadership, resulting in a series of armistice agreements between Israel and her neighbors in the early months of 1949, culminating in the agreement between Transjordan and Israel on April 3. Many questions remained to be settled, and still remain, but at least the military phase of the war was arrested. The cease-fire lines became the "temporary" boundaries separating Israel and her Arab neighbor nations.

The Arab states had suffered an unexpected and embarrassing defeat —especially Egypt and Transjordan, which had assumed most of the initiative for the Arab cause.

Yet, in terms of territory, both Egypt and Transjordan gained, as well as Israel. The part of Palestine that had been assigned to the Arabs for the erection of an independent state was now divided about equally between Israel on the one side— 2,380 square miles, including a portion of the bleak Negeb—and the two Arab states on the other. Egypt gained the Gaza Strip, and Transjordan added 2,000 square miles of land west of the Jordan River. In order to justify its annexation of land in Palestine, the Transjordan Government announced that the country would thereafter be known as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The Arabs in the added area (some 400,000—mostly refugees) were made citizens of the enlarged kingdom.

On May 11, 1949, Israel became the 59th member of the United Nations.

V

1949–1955

As a result of the Arab-Israeli war, about 900,000 Arabs from Israel became refugees. They came under the care of the United Nations, which set up refugee camps and services in the countries bordering Israel.

Since the war, about 400,000 Jewish refugees have been received by Israel from Arab lands. In the same period, Israel has accepted more than 400,000 Jewish refugees and immigrants from other parts of the world.

After the armistice in 1949, there began immediately a series of raids and border incursions, of retaliatory raids and incursions, which continued with only brief interludes for seven years.

The Security Council has made a number of attempts to effect a settlement of the Palestine problem, but because the Arab Governments refuse to negotiate with Israel the Security Council has not tried to force a solution, preferring to support the *status quo* of the armistice agreements. Observation teams have been maintained by the United Nations in the troubled area, and there have been occasional resolutions condemning one country or another for a particularly objectionable border violation.

Egypt has prevented Israel from using the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba.

A tragic outcome of the war in Palestine has been the partition of Jerusalem, the Holy City of three great faiths.

Arab Refugees

The most tragic by-product of the Arab-Israeli war is the Arab refugee problem.

The local warfare in Palestine in the closing months of the British mandate and the full-scale war that followed the erection of Israel as an independent state caused nearly a million Arabs to leave their homes and to find shelter at last in sprawling refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the Gaza Strip occupied by Egypt.

About half the Arabs displaced by the hostilities found refuge on either side of the Jordan River, where they were granted Jordanian citizenship, a gesture not unrelated to Jordan's desire to establish moral claim to areas east of the river over which the Arab Legion held military control. Abdullah, King of Jordan, welcomed the Arab refugees and expressed interest in their resettlement outside of Israel.

More than 200,000 refugees were packed into the narrow Gaza Strip controlled by Egypt. Lebanon received more than 100,000, while nearly 90,000 found haven in Syria.

These countries refused to grant the newcomers citizenship as this would seem to jeopardize their status as refugees. Lebanon and Syria, along with Egypt, demanded that the refugees should be restored to their former homes and properties.

A United Nations resolution of December, 1948, provided that "the refugees willing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so." Israel, however, held that the Arab refugees had not been expelled from their former homes, but had left voluntarily, and that the country was under no obligation to repatriate more than a token number of them. Moreover, argued Israel, there was already a minority problem represented by the more than 100,000 Arabs who still remained in the new state. It would not be wise to build up this problem beyond its present proportions. Furthermore, said Israel, any mass return of Arab refugees would pose major security risks in view of the fact that the Arab states refused to negotiate peace treaties and regarded themselves as still being "at war" with Israel.

Israel pointed out, too, that she was undertaking to provide sanctuary and care for a considerable number of Jewish refugees.

(It is interesting to note that fairly recent statements by Israeli representatives in the United Nations on the Arab refugee question reiterate virtually the same reasons stated in 1948 for a refusal to discuss large-scale repatriation.)

Israel has made three gestures in the direction of assisting the Arab refugees. First, after many months of delay, certain blocked bank accounts of refugees have been released. Secondly, she had indicated —repeatedly, in recent years—her willingness to compensate the refugees for their losses and to provide financial assistance toward their resettlement. Thirdly, she has instituted a "family reunion" plan, by which refugees were allowed to return to Israel in order to rejoin their families or relatives who continued to live in the new country. By this plan, some 35,000 refugees returned prior to 1953 when the Arab states put an end to it.

UNRWA

The Arab refugee problem immediately became a concern of the United Nations. A temporary agency was set up for "the relief and rehabilitation" of the unfortunate victims of the Arab-Israeli war. It was unable to achieve any large results, however, because of lack of funds, the failure of the great powers to recognize the size and urgency of the problem, and political roadblocks put in its way by both the Arab states and Israel.

In 1950 the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was set up on a more durable basis and with more substantial backing. UNRWA was able to achieve more than the *ad hoc* program that it succeeded.

UNRWA's activities include the registration and classification of refugees, the providing of shelter and food on an adequate though minimum basis for some 300,000 refugees in more than fifty camps, the setting up of school and hospital facilities, the providing of medical

care, the introduction of vocational training, the elaboration of social welfare services. UNRWA coordinates its work with that of a number of other UN agencies such as the Children's Fund, the Technical Assistance Administration, and the World Health Organization, and with private agencies such as Church World Service and the International Red Cross.

A great difficulty, however, is raised by the very nature of the work in which UNRWA is engaged. For many refugees, the assistance they receive in the camps represents a higher standard of living than anything in their previous experience. Moreover, the refugees are enjoying a better life and greater security than large segments of the populations of the communities in which some of the camps are located.

A major problem facing UNRWA derives from the determination of the Arab states to deny Israel's right to exist. As long as this attitude prevails, the Arabs will refuse to do anything that would seem to support the idea of Israel's permanence. For them to assume any responsibility for the Arab refugees would imply a recognition of Israel's status that they are unwilling to make. So they continue to view the refugee problem as the responsibility of the international community, which in the first place was responsible, they truly believe, for permitting the Zionist state to come into existence on "Arab soil."

The Arab refugees themselves seem to be willing to accept no solution of their problem short of repatriation. Some responsible UN workers close to the situation believe that relatively few of the refugees would actually choose to return to their former homes in Israel (under present conditions, far different from the conditions of 1947), but that they must be given the right to choose. Once a bona fide offer of repatriation is made and the refugee chooses not to accept it (as will be the case, it is believed, among 95 per cent of the refugees), then the way is opened for other solutions based on resettlement. The repatriation offer would have to be consonant with Israel's security requirements. This approach is sincerely advocated by a number of careful students of the Palestine question.

There would seem to be a great deal of realism in Israel's insistence, however, that the solution of the refugee problem cannot precede but must follow the political settlement. So long as the balance is based on an armistice rather than on treaties of peace and co-operation between herself and her Arab neighbors, declares Israel, an offer of large-scale repatriation would pose grave security risks she cannot afford to take.

In assessing the situation and discussing solutions, we must not forget that the Arab refugees are human beings—men and women, boys and girls, young people eager to launch out into life. We must see the problem not only in its political aspects, but more deeply in living human terms.

Jewish Refugees

Israel was dedicated from the beginning to the policy that her doors should be kept open for Jewish immigration.

As the military phase of the Arab-

Israeli war came to an end, and as Israel refused to assume more than token responsibility for the dispossessed Arab refugees, it was inevitable that retaliatory pressures should be brought upon Jews living in Arab lands, especially in countries having substantial Jewish populations. The oppressions assumed many forms, in varying intensities.

In March, 1950, the Government of Iraq announced that all Iraqi Jews would be "permitted" to leave the country within one year. This drastic measure affected most of the nearly 150,000 Jews in Iraq who were descendants of Jewish elements in the region for many centuries. Anti-Jewish reprisals occurred in other parts of the Arab world, from Yemen, in the far southern reaches of the Arabian Peninsula, with its 50,000 Jews (many descended from Jews who settled there in the first century) to North Africa.

There was no doubt about Israel's willingness to receive these refugees. Nevertheless, the whole tragic situation thrust upon Israel very grave difficulties. First was the question as to whether Israel, whose population already had doubled within two years and whose economy was strained by the recent war, could absorb a rising tide of indigent newcomers. Secondly, Israel's background and culture were essentially Western and European, while the Jewish refugees from the Arab lands were Oriental. The fugitives from Yemen, for example, came out of a background so primitive and feudalistic that they had very little in common with the citizens of Israel and very little, at first, to offer to the common life.

During the first four years, the Republic of Israel received more than 700,000 immigrants, most of them as destitute refugees. They lived in overcrowded slums and in temporary camps. Their presence added greatly to the country's problems in the fields of health and education.

It is estimated that nearly 400,000 Jewish refugees have streamed into Israel from Arab lands. In the meantime, more than 400,000 immigrants and refugees have entered from other lands.

Raids and Counterraids

Ever since the war, Israel's borders, especially those common with Egypt and Jordan, have been subject to infiltrations and raids. In view of the political and emotional tensions aroused by the Palestinian war, it is difficult to believe that a "quiet" border could long exist.

Both the Arab countries and Israel list and "document" large numbers of "border incidents." It is possible that many of the "incidents," especially at first, were cases of illegal crossings—refugees visiting friends or families across the border, travelers crossing the Negeb who could not afford to fly from Jordan to Egypt, even Israeli Arabs crossing the border in order to purchase articles in Arab markets that they could not buy in their own communities. Efforts were made to regulate this movement by the issuing of dated passes honored at the borders, but the Arab states were reluctant to co-operate.

At the same time, lawless elements took advantage of the situation. The "incidents" included thefts,

robberies, and deliberate sabotage. There were increasing instances of murderous assaults and ambushes. On occasions, the border "incidents" assumed the proportions of guerrilla warfare.

Later still, Egypt organized and trained commando units, called Fedayeen, to function as "suicide" marauders along the border. They operated mostly from the Gaza Strip, but they penetrated many sections of central and southern Israel. It came to be said that "every Jew in Israel sleeps within twenty miles of an Arab dagger." The Fedayeen were responsible for many cruel raids in 1955 and 1956. On a March morning in 1956, for example, six children were mowed down as they entered a synagogue at an agricultural school near Tel Aviv.

Other border "incidents" have been actual clashes, both minor and major in severity, between military units of the two sides. Sometimes armed forces have carried out incursions, for one reason or another, deep into "enemy" territory.

Israel's strategy often has been to "save up" her grievances against the Arabs for their border violations and then to carry out a relatively large-scale retaliation of a dramatic nature. The attack on Qibya in October, 1953, and the shelling of Gaza in the spring of 1956 were of this nature. Both "incidents" evidently were planned in high quarters and were done in the spirit of vengeance. In the Qibya attack, forty-two persons lost their lives.

On several occasions, the United Nations has reprimanded one side or the other. Various attempts were made to regulate or guarantee the borders against violation. France and Great Britain in 1950 joined the United States in a proposal to assure the borders. All these efforts failed, however, because they required the support and co-operation of the Palestine rivals, and the Arab Governments persist in their refusal to negotiate with Israel.

After 1951, the Security Council of the United Nations resorted to the use of truce observation teams in Palestine. In the spring of 1956, when an explosive situation developed on the Gaza border, the Security Council directed the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld, to use his influence to relieve the tension. Strong opposition by the Arab states made it impossible for Mr. Hammarskjöld to do anything more than discuss the immediate issues with the parties involved in the dispute. They refused to move in the direction of a basic settlement.

When the Secretary-General proposed a mile-wide zone along the disturbed borders of Israel, policed by UN truce supervision teams, Israel refused to agree. She claimed that on several occasions the UN observers had unfairly accused her of acts of aggression in reference to "incidents" that were meant to be "retaliatory" in character.

Economic Pressures

The Arab states since the end of hostilities in Palestine have exercised a variety of economic pressures as a way of continuing the "war" against Israel.

From the first, for example, Egypt has been in position to seal the Suez Canal and the Gulf of

Aqaba against Israeli shipping. Oil pipelines from the Kirkuk field in Iraq, terminating at Haifa, were closed by the Iraqi Government. In order to operate the huge refineries at Haifa, Israel has had to import oil by tender from fields in South America.

Moreover, the entire Arab world has been closed to Israeli trade. Much of the world beyond the Middle East, to the east and south, has likewise been closed.

These pressures have hurt Israel's economy at a most delicate time in her economic development. At the same time, Israel has been forced to find and create other means of economic growth. It may turn out that in the long run her economy will be more diversified and viable than if she had been permitted to develop a symbiotic dependence upon the Middle East.

The Holy City

The partition plan for Palestine, adopted by the United Nations in November, 1947, provided for the "internationalization" of Jerusalem and its environs.

When the hostilities ceased in 1948, the military lines elsewhere in Palestine were not greatly different from the boundaries recommended in the plan of partition. The most significant difference between the armistice lines and the original borders was in the approaches to Jerusalem. Israel's territory included an extension from the west into the very heart of Jerusalem. Jordan's area embraced all the Old City with its treasured holy places. Jerusalem, a city sacred to the followers of three great faiths, was divided by a narrow no man's land across which Jewish and Arab guards eyed one another. The Jews controlled the New City with its approximately 100,000 inhabitants. Jordan occupied the walled Old City with its 50,000 people.

During their prolonged armistice negotiations, ending in April, 1949, with the signing of the armistice agreement, neither Israel nor Jordan would consent to the internationalization of the Holy City.

In September, 1949, the UN Conciliation Commission approved a plan for setting up an international regime for Jerusalem. The plan had the support of all the Arab nations but Jordan. Appropriate actions were taken by UN bodies to put the plan into operation, but failed completely for the simple but effective reason that both Israel and Jordan refused to comply.

Meanwhile, Israel proceeded to move nearly all its Government offices to the New City, thus making Jerusalem the nation's capital. This was done in defiance of the UN.

The leading powers which have diplomatic relations with Israel, however, have refused to move their legations or embassies to Jerusalem. Of the twenty-five Governments represented in Israel, only one (the Netherlands) has established its headquarters in Jerusalem. This development has undoubtedly surprised and embarrassed the Israeli Government.

Jordan has taken advantage of the situation by establishing in the Old City an alternate capital, although principal government functions are carried on at Amman (the ancient Philadelphia).

VI

1956–

The delicate military balance in the Middle East had been upset (in 1955) by the decision of the Soviet Union to provide Egypt with massive armaments which would have permitted her to crush Israel.

In the summer of 1956 the United States broke off negotiations with Egypt on financing the Aswan High Dam, a project that Egypt considered essential to her future development. The United States had previously assured Egypt that support for the dam would be provided.

Egyptian reaction was to nationalize the Suez Canal Company. Freedom of transit through the canal was vital to the economy of Great Britain and France, as well as to many other nations. Through July, August, September, and October, Egypt kept the canal open to all ships except those of Israel.

At the end of October, 1956, Israel believed that her continued existence was threatened by the combination of developments in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East, particularly the huge armament build-up in the Sinai Peninsula and the increasing number of extreme statements against her on the part of Arab leaders. Without warning, Israeli troops launched a large-scale armed attack on Egyptian forces in the Sinai area. While this operation was still in its early stages, Britain and France began an assault on Egyptian forces and locations along the Suez Canal.

These actions were severely condemned by the United Nations. The aggressors were directed to withdraw their forces and to relinquish their gains. The way appeared to be opening for a completely new approach, through the offices of the UN, to the problem of Palestine.

The Aswan Dam

A word should be said about Egypt's central problem—people. There are too many people in the country in terms of productive land available for feeding and clothing them. And the problem is getting worse year after year.

In 1800, Egypt's population of 2,500,000 had a hard time making a living on the narrow strip of fertile soil along the Nile River. In the last 150 years agricultural methods have greatly improved, so that Egypt's land produces four or five times as much as it did under the methods employed in 1800. But the population has increased more than nine times—from 2½ million to 23 million.

The building of a high dam across the Nile at Aswan is a long-range project which many people believe will provide sufficient land resources (through irrigation and flood control) and industrial power (through hydroelectric development) to as-

sure Egypt's economic growth and to guarantee for her people a high living standard. It has been said that no modern state needs one thing, for its very life and for the welfare of its people, as much as Egypt needs the Aswan High Dam.

Aswan is located about 400 miles up the Nile. The dam, as proposed, would rise 365 feet above the surface of the river. It would be over three miles long. The dam would create the largest man-made lake in the world—three times the size of Lake Mead above the Hoover Dam in Nevada. The Aswan reservoir would extend 344 miles upstream from the dam—125 miles into the Sudan, where it would force the relocation of 50,000 Sudanese. The water, once the dam is filled and in use, would irrigate 1.3 million acres of Egyptian land now uncultivatable. It would also provide for year-round irrigation for 670,000 acres now only partly watered and producing only one crop a year. The hydroelectric possibilities are enormous—something like 720,000 kilowatts of additional power.

The Aswan High Dam would cost $1,350,000,000. The original proposal called for a loan in the amount of $270,000,000 from the World Bank, the United States, and the United Kingdom—$200,000,000 in a ten-year loan from the bank, $56,000,000 in a grant from the United States, and $14,000,000 in a grant from Britain. The Suez crisis in the summer of 1956 was precipitated by the American decision to withdraw from the project, followed by the withdrawal of the United Kingdom and the World Bank.

Many people believe that the Aswan High Dam does not offer anything like the answers to Egypt's economic and human problems that the Egyptian Government seems to anticipate. For one thing, it has been pointed out that the dam, even if it were started immediately, would not be completed and in full production for fifteen years. At this time the population of Egypt would not be 23,000,000 people as at present, but about 35,000,000. The result would be that, even with the enlarged capacities provided by the dam, Egypt's economic problem and the living standards of her people would be about the same as they are now.

Moreover, say the detractors of the project, for the Egyptian Government to have to provide the more than one billion dollars to make the dam project possible would create for Egypt a financial crisis of major proportions, and would invite disastrous inflation unless the leaders were willing and able to enforce rigid controls over the country's economy. The Nasser regime appears unable and unwilling, at present, to plan for such controls. It should be noted that Egypt has already signed away a large proportion of her cotton crop for years to come to pay for the massive armaments provided in recent months by the Soviet Union.

Furthermore, say the doubters of the Aswan Dam project, the Government of the Sudan, which country would be greatly affected by the development, has already vetoed the parts of the project that Egypt considers essential—particularly the ratio for the division of the waters

of the Nile between Egypt and the Sudan.

Some responsible engineers suggest that a much more useful project than the Aswan High Dam would be a comprehensive Nile development program planned cooperatively by all the nations through which the Nile and its upper tributaries flow, and involving a number of upstream and downstream reservoirs. Such a regional development of the Nile would benefit Egypt along with the Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, and other areas of Central and East Africa.

All these factors need to be taken into consideration as we try from this distance to assess the events of the summer and fall of 1956.

The Sinai Invasion

Israel's large-scale military invasion of the Sinai Peninsula in late October, 1956, surprised everybody and shocked not a few. Another surprise was the apparent ease with which the Egyptians were overrun until the Israeli units had penetrated in their territory within a few miles of the Suez Canal, occupied practically all the Sinai area, seized huge quantities of Egyptian war materiel, much of it valuable equipment lately provided by the Soviet Union, and occupied the Gaza Strip.

When, within a few days of the opening of the Israeli campaign, British and French aircraft were dropping bombs on Port Said and other points along the Suez, many people believed that there must have been collusion between Israel, Great Britain, and France. The three countries denied that there was collusion. However, it is quite possible that they knew more of one another's plans in this or that eventuality than the United States Government seemed to know in advance about the activities and developments in the Middle East. The French and British affirmed that their invasion was elicited by a desire to protect the Suez Canal from destruction in a war which they saw developing between Israel and Egypt, a war which would certainly have involved the canal area. They were also concerned about the increase of the Egyptian campaign of hatred and violence against them both in Africa and Asia.

The Western world almost universally condemned the British and the French for their aggression against Egypt. Public opinion, particularly as expressed through actions and discussions at the United Nations, forced the French and the British to call it a day and to withdraw even before their objective, which seemed to be the overthrowing of the Nasser regime in Egypt, had been accomplished.

World opinion is also critical of Israel's aggressive action, although a great many people in the West sympathize deeply with Israel's motive of self-preservation. The Israeli Government declared that its major purpose in launching the attack on Egypt was to put an end to the Fedayeen raids along the Egyptian border, particularly those originating in the Gaza Strip, and to break the blockade against Israeli shipping in the Gulf of Aqaba. Israel also feared imminent attack from Egypt, whose representatives had been saying with increasing frequency that the Zionist nation must be destroyed.

More Recent Developments

The present situation in the Mideast, apropos especially of Arab-Israeli relations and the problem of Palestine, is compounded of several factors.

1. Not the least important is the increasing usefulness and effectiveness of the United Nations as a vehicle of world opinion and an instrument of international order.

The Israeli-Egyptian crisis of the fall of 1956 posed for the United Nations a major test of its effectiveness. The United Nations has come through with flying colors. It has more than vindicated the support of its friends and it has won the respect of people, even among its critics, throughout the Western world.

The UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, has again proved himself to be the world's number one diplomat.

An especially useful outcome of recent events, so far as the United Nations is concerned, has been the creation of a UN emergency force to patrol the Suez and to supervise the withdrawal of contesting forces from the areas involved in the military actions of the fall of 1956.

2. Another factor of considerable portent has been Israel's apparent reluctance to comply fully with the UN's order to withdraw her troops from Egyptian territory, especially from the Gaza Strip and areas adjacent to the Gulf of Aqaba. Her fears have seemed to be that if Egypt reoccupied these regions (1) the Fedayeen raids would be renewed from bases in Gaza, and (2) the Gulf of Aqaba would remain closed to Israeli ships.

The UN resolution of November 2, 1956, called for the withdrawal of British, French, and Israeli forces. It also called for the cessation of border raids and the fulfillment of the armistice agreements which provide for Israel's "rights" in both the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba.

3. Arab nationalism is another aspect of the Middle East situation that bears heavily upon the Palestine problem. Nationalism in the Arab world is tied to Islamic culture. It is a fierce drive toward independence and self-sufficiency. It tends to be strongly anti-European. There is a deep feeling of oneness among the people of the entire Arab world.

Yet among the nations of the Arab bloc there are rivalries and divisions. Egypt's dream of empire and Nasser's assumption of the role of spokesman for the Arab people have alarmed conservative Arab leaders throughout the Mideast. Anti-Egyptian reaction has appeared recently in Saudi Arabia and in Lebanon. The breach between Iraq and Egypt, occasioned by Iraq's decision two years ago to join the Western-sponsored Baghdad Pact, has been dramatic and deep.

On the subject of Israel, of course, the Arab nations speak with one voice, especially in the United Nations.

It should be noted that among the Arab masses of the Mideast, Nasser is practically worshiped as the greatest hero and leader of the age.

4. A disturbing element in the present situation has been the rise of a new refugee problem as a result of the Suez crisis.

The bombardment of Port Said caused 120,000 persons to seek safety elsewhere, mostly in the towns and

cities of the Nile Delta. More than 10,000 Egyptian refugees have added to the already huge refugee problem of the Gaza area.

Meanwhile, many Jews in Egypt have been severely persecuted. Among them were stateless Jews who wandered into Egypt from other Mideast countries and from Eastern Europe many years ago; Jewish businessmen and their families who had been residents of Egypt for generations (many of them) but who had British, French, and Italian passports; and many Jews with Egyptian citizenship. Several hundred Jewish refugees from Egypt have sought haven in Europe. The Jewish population of Egypt has been estimated variously at from 40,000 to 60,000.

5. Oil has almost become another word for the Middle East. A large part, perhaps 60 per cent, of the world's known oil reserves are located in the vicinity of the Persian Gulf.

Very little of the Mideast's oil is to be found in Palestine or in the countries bordering Israel. This region has, or could have, a large stake in the oil industry, however, in terms of pipelines, refineries, shipping facilities.

The fact that at least 60 per cent of Middle Eastern oil is produced by American interests gives the area new prominence and importance in the United States. Our country and her people are involved in a new, dramatic way in the welfare of the Mideast.

6. A political factor in the present Mideast situation is the crisis in Jordan. The little country, half of whose population are Palestinian refugees, cannot (apparently) develop a viable economy. The withdrawal of British underwriting of the Arab Legion has produced a serious financial problem. Jordan must get help from other sources to replace Britain's aid. A "power vacuum" has been created, with explosive possibilities. It seems that several of the Arab states would be "willing" to form a close political alliance with Jordan—Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Egypt.

7. Two other serious factors are water and people.

The rate of population increase in the Arab world is very high—about 2 per cent a year, meaning that the population doubles in forty years. The development of the Middle East must be projected against this demographic reality.

The great physical need in Palestine, of course, is water—or rather, the efficient use of the available water. Israel and her Arab neighbors have yet to come to an agreement concerning the useful development of the rich water resources of the Jordan Valley.

Toward a Solution

The present situation in Palestine is still very dangerous. It is possible, however, that recent events have set in motion influences and forces that may open the way to a peace settlement between Israel and the nations of the Arab League.

A solution of the Palestine problem would have to include several approaches.

1. The borders must be secured. This very likely will require the use of United Nations emergency units. It is possible that the Gaza region and parts of the Sinai Peninsula along the Gulf of Aqaba will have to be occupied by UN units. Perhaps

the idea of a mile-wide "patrol" strip along all sensitive borders should be revived as a temporary measure.

2. There must be a just settlement of the problem of the Arab refugees. This would seem to include the acceptance by Israel of a limited number of refugees for repatriation, the resettlement of large numbers of refugees in various parts of the Arab world, the emigration of a small number to other lands, the permanent care by the UN of "hard core" cases, fair compensation for property and savings the refugees lost in their flight from Israel in 1948. The huge expense of refugee resettlement and rehabilitation may well be borne by the international community. The refugee problem, let us remember, is a primary key to peace in the Middle East, and by any measure its solution will be worth all it costs.

3. In due time there must be adjustments of inequities that exist in the present borders of Israel. These borders, which were meant to be temporary, generally follow the cease-fire lines of 1948. Many minor adjustments are in order—and perhaps some major changes. It is seriously proposed, for example, that part of western Galilee should be ceded by Israel to one of the Arab nations, that a section of the Negeb should likewise be surrendered by Israel, and that the Jordan "bulge" deep into Palestine should be ceded to Israel. It is also suggested that Jerusalem and other holy places be internationalized or placed under supervision of an appropriate international commission.

4. Economic arrangements essential to peace would include (1) the ending of the Arab boycott against Israel and the opening of the Suez Canal to Israeli shipping, (2) the development of common water resources to serve the entire region (i.e., the Johnson plan), (3) agreements concerning the use of one or more Israeli ports (Haifa, Acre) by inland Arab states, (4) large-scale economic aid and technical assistance from the international community.

Justice for All

A prime obstacle to peace in Palestine is the feeling of the Arabs that they are the victims of a deep injustice. It is difficult for many Arabs to accept the idea that Israel is a fact and is there to stay.

Dr. Charles Malik, outstanding Christian statesman of Lebanon, seems hopeful that the Arab attitude will be transformed. "Israel is a great mystery," he says. "You are dealing [not] with political issues only: there are profound theological dimensions to the mystery. But whatever the aspect under which the situation is viewed, the Near East can never be the same again after the rise of Israel. The present political reaction is only the first spontaneous, and to that extent superficial, reaction to this new and strange fact. In the maturation of their reaction, when they sufficiently wake up to what has really happened and when they take in its total meaning, the Arabs will in their wonder reach down to far deeper levels of their existence. They will undergo a profound transformation. It is most important that the world . . . should base their relations to the Arabs on manifest principles of justice and truth. . . . Objective truth and justice can still the emotions and help in establishing peace."

From *The Palestine Problem Today*, by Carl Hermann Voss. The Beacon Press.